

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 6,463,974 to Hellweg et al. in view of DE 1232845 (hereinafter DE '845). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Applicant respectfully submits that one of ordinary skill in the art would not have modified the Hellweg et al. reference in light of DE '845 in the manner suggested by the Examiner. As correctly acknowledged by the Examiner, the Hellweg et al. reference fails to disclose the claimed notches in the bent edges of the annular shell, as defined in independent Claim 1. Accordingly, the Examiner relied upon DE 1232845 (DE '845) for this feature.

In response, Applicant respectfully submits that it is improper for the Examiner to modify the shell of the run-flat support member of Hellweg et al. based on a teaching from DE '845, which relates to a rubber tire re-treading strip. Initially, a run flat-support is very different from a tire re-treading strip. For example, a tire re-treading strip is made of rubber, while the shell of a run flat support member is a rigid member made of a metal material. Additionally, a tire re-treading strip is attached on the outside of a tire, while the run flat support member shell is attached within the cavity of a pneumatic tire. Further, attaching a rubber tire re-treading strip to a tire is a very different process from that of the present invention, which relates to improving the drawing process of forming a metal annular shell of a run flat support without cracking or other problems. In order to highlight one of these differences, Applicant has amended Claim 1 to recite that the annular shell is "formed of a

metal material.” Thus, due to these differences, Applicant respectfully submits that one of ordinary skill in the art of run-flat supports would not have modified a run flat support based on DE ‘845, which is in the art of tire re-treading.

Further, Applicant respectfully submits that the problem identified and solved by Applicant is not readily apparent from DE ‘845 because of structural differences in the areas including the notches. More specifically, as can be seen in Figure 8 (“Abb. 8”) of DE ‘845, when the tire re-tread strip is positioned for use, the areas 4 that include the notches 3 and 3’ (index numbers are shown in Figure 1) are aligned generally radially. Accordingly, the need for such notches is readily apparent because there is a difference in circumference between the outer and inner portions of areas 4, and such notches allow for these different circumferences without buckling (or wrinkling) areas 4. In contrast, the ends of the annular shell of Hellweg et al. and of the present invention extend generally axially (see e.g., Applicant’s Figures 2 and 3, including bent ends 7). Thus, there is not the significant difference in circumference between different portions of the annular shell ends, and accordingly the buckling problem is not as significant or as readily apparent in the annular shell of Hellweg et al. and the present invention defined in Claim 1. Further, the cited references do not indicate that bucking or high stress is a problem in the bent portions of a run flat support, which is the problem that Applicant identified and solved through the use of the claimed notches. Accordingly, for the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of this §103 rejection of independent Claim 1 and associated dependent Claims 2-5.

Claims 1-5 stand rejected on the ground of non-statutory obviousness-type double patenting over United States Patent No. 6,843,288 to Seko et al. In response, Applicant has enclosed herewith a Terminal Disclaimer directed to the Seko et al. patent. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

For all of the above reasons, Applicant requests reconsideration and allowance of the claimed invention. Should the Examiner be of the opinion that a telephone conference would aid in the prosecution of the application, or that outstanding issues exist, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney.

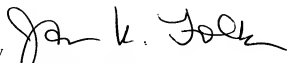
If a Petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) for an extension of time for response is required to make the attached response timely, it is hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) for an extension of time for response in the above-identified application for the period required to make the attached response timely. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required to this Application under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 07-2069.

Respectfully submitted,
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